

queen's want of energy, but at the same time serves as a check against any encroachment upon the prerogatives of the sovereign.

The powers of this court even extend to an impeachment of the royal ruler.

The mode of trial, both of civil and criminal cases, is by a jury, and free argument is allowed. The testimony is not given upon oath, but the penalty for giving false evidence is severe. The jury is composed of six persons; and every one has the right of being tried by his peers.

The reigning queen is named Aimata, but is more usually known as Pomare IV. She is the sister of the late king, and grand-daughter to that Pomare I. who acquired the sovereignty of Tahiti, soon after its discovery. She is now (1839) about twenty-seven years of age, and has been twice married: the first time to Pomare, a young chief of Tahaa, from whom she was divorced; the second, to a young chief of the island of Huaheine, by whom she has one son, the heir of the throne. The general appellation he goes by is Pomare *taue*, equivalent to king-consort.

Next in rank to the queen, is her aunt, Ariapaca, the eldest sister of her mother, and at one time queen-regent. She still possesses great influence.

In case of failure of the queen's posterity, the next heirs to the throne are the princesses Ninito and Taii, who are the queen's cousins, and nieces to Pomare II.

Uata, the godfather of the queen, although not a chief by birth, has from this connexion obtained great influence in the queen's councils, and may be termed prime minister.

The seven judges of the supreme tribunal are nominated by the queen, but the nomination must be confirmed by the legislature. Those who at present hold the office are all large landholders, and men of the highest character and intelligence to be found in the population. They are in fact the rulers of the kingdom. Five of them, viz.: Paofai, Mare, Utami, Taati, and Tanoni, reside on the island of Tahiti; the other two, Ruetone and Mahine, at Eimeo.

In spite of the small extent of the kingdom, it is not without subjects to distract its councils. There are two distinct parties: the one led by the queen and the missionaries; the other, by some of the chiefs. The leaders of the latter are Paofai, Hitoti, and Taua, who are descended from the ancient kings dethroned by Pomare I. These chiefs have large domains, and many of the raatiras (landholders) take part with them. They are, besides, distinguished by qualities which give them consideration among the islanders. Paofai, who has more